

# SOIL OF LIBERTY

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PUT OUT BY NORTH COUNTRY ANARCHISTS

AND ANARCHO-FEMINISTS

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## DIRECT ACTION NON-VIOLENCE

We present in this issue articles about groups involved with direct action non-violence. The Plowshare Community, the local affiliate of the Movement for a New Society, is conducting two intensive sessions to train non-violence organizers. Movement for a New Society has been very involved in systematizing non-violence training and action campaigns, emphasizing personal as well as political change.

The Community for Creative Non-Violence in Washington, D.C. was very active in direct action/civil disobedience against the war and for social justice. They continue now with a "Housing Campaign for the Poor."

Farmers in western and central Minnesota are having a struggle with two electric power coops that want to run high-voltage power lines across their land. Dozens of farmers have been involved with blocking the surveyors for the line and one farmer drove his tractor right across the surveying equipment. The county sheriff has been reluctant to arrest his neighbors and the controversy has been kicked upstairs to the governor who in turn is trying to interest both sides in an arbitrator from New York City to mediate.



The article goes in to the political problems of the farmers. (On a side note, in a very similar power line dispute in upstate New York, members of the Movement for a New Society from Philadelphia have been called in to help in support work and by giving workshops in non-violence.)

We also have a review of the new film about the life of Meridell LeSueur, "My People are My Home." Brother What has a prescription for any of you suffering from the late winter blues. And finally, a review of the novel Family by the Chinese anarchist Pa Chin.

# Training for



## Nonviolent Revolution

By Steve Chase

Two intensive, live-in training sessions for Twin Cities area activists are being offered from March 2 to March 6, and March 16 to March 20, at Twin Cities Friends Meeting House, 295 Summit Ave., St. Paul. These training programs are being coordinated by those of us in the Plowshare Network Organizing Collective of Movement for a New Society.

Movement for a New Society is a nation-wide communication network of groups working to build a decentralized populist movement for nonviolent revolution. Groups participating in M.N.S. envision a new society based on maximum decentralization and democracy in political and economic sectors, social ownership of productive capital, guaranteed social services, creative work and leisure, harmony with the earth, and the integration of women, men, and children into all spheres of social life.

### THE PROGRAMS

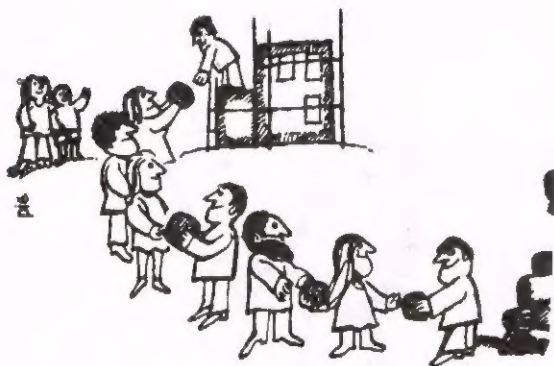
The training sessions will be an opportunity to learn, review, and share a

variety of skills needed for effective work for social change. The first session will be fairly general, including workshops on consciousness-raising, democratic decision making, countering sexist patterns in groups, living in political community, nonviolent theory and practice, and macro-analysis seminars (an egalitarian study process for activists, exploring their political economic environment and possible strategies for change). The second session will be composed of workshops focused on the skills and strategies necessary to organize demonstrations and sustained direct action campaigns. Workshops will include choosing a focus, organizing, negotiations, media relations, and direct action.

The workshops will be facilitated by members of the Plowshare Collective, and by Johanna Matteus and Bill Moyer of the Philadelphia Life Center. The Life Center is a training and action community of over 120 activists in a Southwest Philadelphia neighborhood. Johanna, formerly a community organizer in Hamburg, West Germany, is presently working with Seeds for Change, a training collective participating in the M.N.S. network. She has been a trainer and organizer for the United Farm Workers, Operation Namibia and a recent anti-nuclear power plant

*Steve Chase is a member of the Plowshares Community.*

campaign in Philadelphia. Bill Moyer, co-author of Moving Toward a New Society and co-founder of the Philadelphia Life Center and Movement for a New Society, has been involved in direct action and organizing with the peace and civil rights movements since 1960. He has worked with such organizations as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Spring Mobilization to End the War. Political experience among members of our collective includes street theatre for the R-1 Bomber/Peace Conversion Campaign, organizing macro-analysis seminars, and a year-long campaign to return democratic control to Powderhorn Food Community during the recent political struggle within the North Country co-ops.



#### WHY TRAINING?

We feel that in order to build a democratic movement strong enough to force basic change, it is necessary that many people all over the country have skills in the following areas: developing and sharing analysis, operating democratically and efficiently in groups, building direct action campaigns, responding creatively to conflict situations, and celebration together. Training programs can play a useful role in spreading these skills.

It is our experience that the way we learn is not neutral. It can serve to either domesticate us or liberate us. Skill-sharing is an educational process which springs from our own experience and affirms our ability to make meaningful changes, to be co-creators of history. It is an empowering process which encounters the elitist influence of charismatic leaders and hierarchical organizations on our movement by spreading skills and encouraging self-confidence.

#### WHY DIRECT ACTION?

The emphasis in our workshops on non-violent direct action grows out of our strategy for change. The strength of a nonviolent revolutionary movement is that it seeks the direct redistribution of power through forms of struggle which reveal people's tremendous untapped power for social change. We agree with the editors of *Peace News* when they state,

"In our conception, nonviolent revolution must be based on the self-activity of the people - at times this will be a slow, self-reliant reorganization of society from the bottom, at others it will be convulsive. It will involve massive struggle, often taking insurrectionary forms such as strikes, occupations, demonstrations, and other forms of noncooperation and civil usurpation."

Through direct action people unlearn the habits of submission far more deeply than is possible with electoral politics or armed struggle. Gene Sharp in The Politics of Non-violent Action points out that strategies for electoral politics and armed struggle are based on a monolithic view of political power as ...emitting from the few who stand at the top of the chain of command. Advocates of nonviolent direct action perceive such power as ultimately fragile "dependent for its strength and existence upon the replenishment of its sources by which it may

or may not continue." The outcome of the former view of power is to discount the direct power of the people and believe that political power can only be controlled "by changes in the 'ownership' of the monolith (the State) - whether with regular procedures (such as elections) or with irregular ones (regicide\* or coup d'etat)..." A movement based on the more accurate latter view of power is far more likely to create a truly democratic and egalitarian society.

As Dave Dellinger observes in More Power Than We Know,

"Unless the people have exercised their own power of self-reliance and human solidarity before and during the revolution, they are not apt to be in a position (spiritually or materially) to exercise them after it."

Direct action campaigns are a powerful way to confront the institutional obstacles to human development. They do so by dramatizing the injustice at the foundation of our social system. This dramatization through action is an important means of arousing the consciousness and indignation necessary to sustain mass noncooperation of large segments of the populace. An effective direct action campaign builds to a crisis where the authorities involved are in a no-win position: if they allow the action to continue, the movement is successful because the demonstration halts business as usual or illustrates the particular social injustice; if the authorities respond with repression, the violent basis of our society is revealed.

A strategic question for activists is, as George Lakey put it in Manifesto for Nonviolent Revolution, "how can repressive violence work against the government itself, rather than against us?" He believes that;

"The government's own force can work against itself, as in ju-jitsu, when it is met indirectly. Instead of pitting guns against repressive violence, meeting the opponent on his superior ground, the movement responds nonviolently. This has two effects: it begins the process of demoralization among the troops and police which may accelerate in later stages, and it discredits the government in the eyes of the masses."

By applying force without violence a peoples' movement can confront the old order while preparing the life-affirming values which animate our struggle for radical democracy.



#### OTHER PROJECTS

We see the two upcoming training programs as part of our collective's larger task. In the future, we hope to assist the development of a network of local groups, affiliated with Movement for a New Society, which are balanced in the areas of political action, training, and alternative culture (i.e. communes, groups for personal

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\* the killing of a king or leader

growth, and counter institutions). The mutual aid network structure allows for autonomy and initiative, while providing unity, communication, and coordination when necessary. Such a network among local groups sharing a high common denominator of analysis, vision, and strategy could:

- undertake a variety of political action projects including direct action campaigns;
- provide valuable training for local and regional people;
- be a living community for activists, rooting our program in changed values and lives;
- and provide a strong voice for libertarian socialist-feminist strategy in local social change coalitions.

We are presently working on a group study/writing project to provide a more detailed description of our vision concerning the structure and potential for a local M.N.S. network. While we realize our ideas will grow and change as we share them with other people (as our collective grows), we feel it is important to offer something concrete to which people can respond. We hope to have the paper completed by early Spring.

For further information about the training programs or about the Movement for a New Society network, contact the Plowshare Network Organizing Collective, 3628 Park Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55407, Phone: (612) 825-8644.

## ORGANIZER'S WORKSHOPS

The Plowshare Network Organizing Collective of Movement for a New Society is offering two intensive live-in training programs for experienced and potential nonviolent activists to be held at the Twin Cities Friends Meeting House, 295 Summit Ave., St. Paul.

### March 2-6

The GENERAL TRAINING PROGRAM will focus on consciousness raising and building democratic organizations. Workshops will include:

- \* Macro-analysis Seminars
- \* Countering Sexism in Groups
- \* Group Process Skills
- \* Democratic Decision Making
- \* Living in Political Community
- \* Conflict Resolution
- \* Nonviolence Theory and Practice

### March 16-20

The DIRECT ACTION CAMPAIGN BUILDING PROGRAM will focus on the skills and strategies necessary to organize demonstrations and sustained direct action campaigns. Workshops will include:

- \* Choosing a Focus
- \* Building a Strong Organization
- \* Negotiations
- \* Media Relations
- \* Direct Action Tactics

# Housing for the Poor: a non-violent campaign

By Don Olson

*The Community for Creative Non-Violence in Washington, D.C. has almost achieved success in their year-long struggle with the D.C. Dept. of Housing and Community Development. CCNV wants to have a 38-room abandoned building turned over to them for use as emergency shelter for evicted families. A pamphlet CCNV put out last December gives the background to their non-violent campaign.*

On any given day in Washington hundreds of people are sleeping in parks, boarded-up buildings and empty cars. In 1975 alone, there were 2,260 families evicted from their homes. Because of the pressures of speculation and renewal, and the considerable impact of broad economic forces and unemployment in a city with many poor residents, the eviction rate has increased more than 600% in the last year. Thousands are homeless.

The assistance offered to evicted families by the city is wholly inadequate--a few days shelter at a motel for some, nothing for most. The District government operates only two emergency shelter facilities, with a maximum capacity of 10 moderate size families each. In the rawness of winter, clusters of the homeless can be seen hovering over fires burning in barrels or garbage cans in vacant lots and alleys. Each year people freeze to death due to lack of shelter.

This crisis situation exists in the face of thousands of abandoned buildings owned by the D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency and absentee landowners. The city holds the deed to an estimated 5000 vacant houses. These buildings are not just symbols of physical decay, they are monuments to moral, economic and political evil. More than that--they are a taunt, a jeer in the face of the homeless. 6

Living and working along the NW 14th St. riot corridor, where the impact of city housing policies is devastating, the Community for Creative Non-Violence has undertaken a response. Beginning last April, CCNV has proposed, negotiated and campaigned actively for the transfer of title to a multi-family 38-room abandoned building, or a comparable structure in the area, from the city's Dept. of Housing and Community Development into a neighborhood land trust. The property would then be rehabilitated, staffed and funded by CCNV with its own money and labor as an emergency shelter for evicted families--returning it to the tax rolls after 9 years of disuse.

As reported recently by a prominent Washington newspaper columnist: "The house has become more than a potential shelter for the poor. It is a symbol of all the abandoned houses in the city that mock the needs of citizens."

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD LAND TRUST

Washington faces a housing crisis of major proportions, and one which must be alleviated by long-term solutions. It is estimated that 77,000 people are living in substandard, over-crowded housing. The city has one of the tightest and most expensive housing markets in the country. The occupancy rate is 99%, while HUD defines a 95% rate as critical. The housing market is clearly a seller's market, with ability to acquire based on ability to pay.

The Columbia Heights neighborhood is located in the heart of the riot corridor--a desolate area, pock-marked with abandoned buildings and empty lots. Fully 34% of the neighborhood is owned by the city, while 55%

is owned by absentee landlords. Located near the Federal Triangle, the area is suffering from intense development pressure facing some of the only vacant property left in the center city. Developers and speculators are becoming increasingly active in investment, eviction and demolition.

In addition to controlling a vast amount of primarily boarded-up buildings, the city's policy of selling packages of property to real estate developers intensifies the problem. Further, available public housing does little to meet the needs of low-income families, while short-term rent subsidies provide little security to those who can afford what is available.

In response, CCNV has been instrumental in the recent establishment of one of the nation's first urban land trusts--the Columbia Heights Community Ownership Project, Inc. The four primary purposes of the Trust are: 1) to halt real estate speculation in the neighborhood before a major transformation of rent levels and sale prices occurs, by taking abandoned or low-cost housing off the market; 2) to demonstrate that land and housing are not commodities to be bought and sold, but are the right of all; 3) to provide low cost adequate housing for low-income residents of the neighborhood; and, 4) to place the control of the future of the neighborhood in the hands of the residents through community ownership of resources.

The trust is composed of a Board of Directors of neighborhood residents, community leaders and Trust leaseholders, with an open general membership and democratic structure. The Trust recently purchased its first property which is undergoing major rehabilitative work, primarily with volunteer resources. The home will then be leased to a neighborhood family in need of low-cost housing.

The Trust will hold title to the property. Trust tenants will be given a 99-year renewable lease, with monthly payments based on their ability to pay and the Trust's ability to subsidize. Equity will be accrued in the form of security of permanence in their home, and a portion of all payments will be set aside for relocation or emergency expenses. Alternative means of financing made possible the purchase of the first property

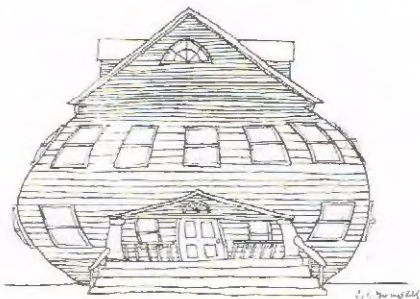
and are being developed as a primary resource for additional acquisition and rehabilitation.

This unique perspective toward relationship with the land and neighbors is summarized in the Statement of Purpose: "Community ownership of land...stands firmly rooted in the traditions of Native Americans and African tribes, and it also has strong ties to Biblical concepts. The land was here long before our birth, and it will remain when we are no longer a memory. It is our responsibility to care rationally and humanely for this vital natural resource entrusted to us. Like the air and the water, the land is held commonly by us all. It is to be respected, to be used as needed with wisdom and concern for those with whom we share it, now and in the future."

Only when full control and title of property are vested, in perpetuity, in the collective hands of the community can there ever be any real security for the poor, or any real stability and continuity in the development of neighborhoods. The greater vision to be realized through the common stewardship of the land by those who use it is the development of neighborhood governed by a set of cooperative values.

#### A NON-VIOLENT CAMPAIGN FOR HOUSING

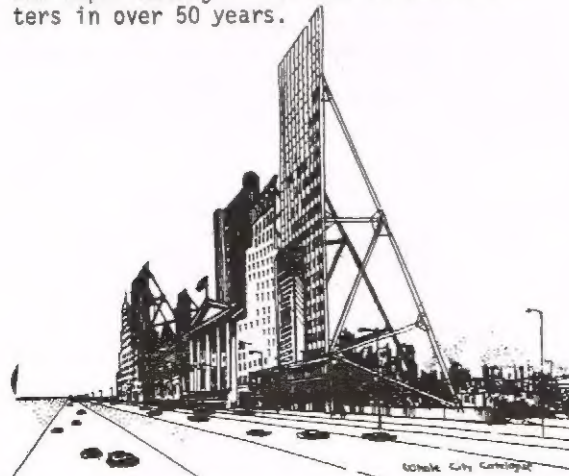
Last June, the Dept. of Housing and Community Development rejected the proposal for an emergency shelter, referring to the "precedental effect" in accepting--as well as their unwillingness to release a property that would bring in "less than the fair reuse appraisal value." In August, five persons were arrested during two non-violent occupa-



tions of the proposed shelter in attempting to enter the property to begin the necessary rehabilitation work. This followed weeks of leafletting city employees, meeting with city officials, and the circulation of a neighborhood petition in support of the proposal that was signed by over 1000 persons. Further direct action was postponed in order to facilitate renegotiation.

Over 50 community organizations have endorsed the proposal, among them the City Wide Housing Coalition, National Catholic Conference for Inter-Racial Justice, Metropolitan Washington Planning and Housing Associates, Gray Panthers, Campaign for Human Development, PUSH, the Downtown Cluster of Congregations, New York Ave. Presbyterian Church, United Farm Workers, Washington Area Clergy and Laity Concerned, Citizens Action Group--as well as other churches, and student, housing and religious groups. Individual support has come from four City Council members, Dick Gregory, Ralph Abernathy, and Dorothy Day. The media has continued to focus favorably on the campaign.

By the end of October, no significant progress had been made. November brought more negotiations and a cancelled date of decision by the city. By mid-December the delay persisted--DHCD continued to deliberate with no great haste. CCNV's sense of urgency and impatience grew as Washington was experiencing one of the coldest winters in over 50 years.



On December 9th, the Community notified the Dept. of Housing that if the city had not made a decision by January 7th, or if it were a negative one, the public campaign would be renewed and continue until resolution. If it becomes necessary, on January 7th four persons will set up cardboard boxes in front of city hall, to live there until the campaign is ended. It will be an attempt to make visible and concrete what has become invisible and abstract--to portray the life that many are forced to live, some in as meager of accommodations as an old overcoat and a box for shelter.

Leaflets will be distributed in front of the housing and city government offices prior to the 7th, and support from around the city and elsewhere will be mobilized. Already, Sojourners Fellowship, an ecumenical Christian community in northwest Washington, has pledged its support for the shelter proposal along with CCNV and will be working closely with the campaign.

A major focus of the campaign in raising the issues of homelessness and city housing policies will be to strongly encourage individuals and institutions to respond to this crisis situation by taking the personal responsibility to help provide temporary housing. CCNV and Sojourners Fellowship will serve as a clearinghouse for housing assistance and facilitate the opening of church basements, school rooms, and private homes to those with no shelter.

That was their plan of action. CCNV had given a month's notice and were all set to go on the 7th when, on the night of the 6th, they received a hand-delivered letter from the DCHC giving them what they wanted. CCNV would: 1) have use of the house on a month to month basis; 2) receive from the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development a waiver of the usual regulations; and 3) have title transferred within one year after beginning use as a shelter (CCNV had originally only asked for transfer after 5 years).

I spoke with Mitch Synder of CCNV in January and he said they considered it a successful non-violent campaign. They had been open and above board in everything they did and had taken the time and energy to get to know the people in city government so

that CCNV was dealing with them on a personal basis. Mitch stressed that CCNV did not consider that they had defeated city officials and they had made it clear that if

granted the first building they would be back requesting more buildings.

But since January 7th the wheels of bureaucracy have again slowed down. First a two-week delay for community review, then two weeks for more study and, as of this writing, two more weeks before a final decision because of a lack of a quorum. CCNV is currently deciding whether to wait for the next meeting or to reactivate their plans for a live-in in front of city hall.

If and when they do get the building, there will be a four-to-five month rehabilitation job with CCNV doing the work. They will use the \$20,000 they earned plastering and painting for eight months. They had wanted to earn the money (rather than obtain grants) because working for money is how most people get what they need. They did not want to set themselves off from other people, but they did want to emphasize that the response of people to what goes on around them in society should be a personal one. But if it does turn out that more money is needed, they would then not be adverse to funding from institutions.

## CCNV SELF-DEFINITION

The Community for Creative Non-Violence is an idea that manifests itself differently in the lives of many in Washington. Some live in community at one of four houses; some gather to labor, to reflect, to struggle, to search. During the past six years CCNV has sought to live non-violence in a vital, creative way, seeking to confront violence and to heal the victims of that violence. The Community operates a free soup kitchen and hospitality house, a free medical clinic, and provides free housing and other assistance to those who have been arrested or are awaiting trial. CCNV is also involved in peace education, organizing for justice, and offering public resistance to policies of the U.S. government.

CCNV owns no property, pays no taxes, and offers no salaries--depending upon the graciousness of those who labor freely, live poorly, and offer support physically, financially and spiritually. Recognizing a need to blend within the individual and the community the elements of spirituality, service, resistance, constructive program and the personal integration of justice, CCNV works to serve those who are victims of society and resist the policies that make them victims.

*The virtues of mercy, non-violence  
Love and truth in any man can  
be truly tested only when they  
are pitted against ruthlessness,  
violence, hatred and untruth...*

*Mohandas K. Gandhi*

*Quote from Martin Luther  
King, Jr. Memorial Poster  
along with his picture, 50¢  
one dozen for 40¢.  
Win Magazine  
503 Atlantic Ave./5th floor  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217*

In its service orientation to the most poor members of society, CCNV operates somewhat in the Catholic Worker tradition, but is not identical in philosophy and includes Catholics, Protestants, and some atheists. CCNV is involved with many people (their Zacchaeus Soup Kitchen feeds 300-500 people a day) but there is a limitation to the individual and social change potentials of a strictly service orientation. Ed Guinan of CCNV recently wrote to Win Magazine that the services they were offering were not breaking the cycle of poverty and he was appealing for help in setting up training in printing so that people could learn a skill and begin to help themselves.

CCNV got into providing emergency shelter after discovering a year ago that there were people with no home or shelter. They now go around their section of D.C. with a van to find these people and offer them a place to sleep. They do so in the hope that no one in Washington will freeze to death this winter. Each of the churches in the DC area has been individually contacted to be open each night. Only one has responded and 30-40 people a night sleep there. Each night CCNV brings back 25-30 people to their four story, 19 bedroom townhouse. This in addition to the 32 people currently there--10 of CCNV and the rest evicted families.

That many people staying there was reminiscent of the numbers CCNV had housed for anti-war demonstrations. CCNV was very active against the war right up to the end--their March 1, 1975 demonstration at the White House (with 62 arrested) was one of the last before the war ended. That is where CCNV came from and they see their current work as a continuation of the positive aspects of their anti-war activity, namely the resistance and direct action to confront the powers that hurt and kill. With the end of the war there was more time to relate to their neighborhood, to develop a "constructive program" (Gandhi), to plant the "seeds of a new society" (Peter Maurin), to touch the lives of people around them. As Mitch Synder put it, "If it can happen with a small number of people, no reason it can't happen on a larger scale."

# LETTERS

Dear Comrades,  
Greetings! We sure hope this letter finds you all in the very best of health. We have received five copies of the last issue and we shall send you the money once they are all sold. We sincerely congratulate you on the good work you are doing on the paper; we are very much impressed with the content of the paper, particularly the last issue. We are of the opinion that SoL is the best consistently published Anarchist Communist paper in the United States. We wish you all the best and fraternal support needed in your on going attempts to propagate the ideal to the mass of uninformed proletarians and intellectuals.

Fraternally yours,  
M.H. Miller  
Solidarity Collective  
Bristol, Rhode Island

Dear friends,  
Although I do not agree with the majority of the articles which you print, I have found Soil of Liberty interesting reading. I am ethically opposed to killing trees for paper and unless SoL is printed on recycled paper, I will prefer not to resubscribe at this time. Peace be with you,  
Billy Mick, Jr.  
Paragould, Arkansas

Our printer checked with their paper suppliers, both of whom no longer carry recycled paper because the cost was too high, the quality too low and little demand. Further investigation was inconclusive. Perhaps someone could send you their copy when they were through reading it.

Thanks for sending me a copy of your mag. I liked it. When co saw the title, she wondered if it had to do with gardening; she hoped so, for that's what she needs right now. I liked the personal tone of your mag, which is often missing in other leftist (including anarchist) periodicals. However, I don't want a subscription to it--I get too many periodicals as it is.

Sincerely,  
Jim Missey  
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

# Farmers Fight Power Play

By Al Wroblewski

The power line controversy has ebbed and flowed into and out of the courts, the legislature, the governor's office, the newspapers, and the score of environmental review panels required by law to put in their two cents worth. The pressure from Cooperative Power Association and the United Power Association, sponsors of the power line, to get the project moving must be enormous. Ironically, many of the farmers protesting the line are members of the power coop yet are helpless to change company attitudes.

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*Al Wroblewski is a community organizer in the Summit-University area of St. Paul and editor of The Minnesota Leader, from which this article is excerpt.*

Matters came to a head in December when there were rumblings for departing Gov. Wendy Anderson to call up the national guard to protect surveyors. The farmers argued that surveying is part of construction and should be banned while the companies said it was not and should be allowed. So far no troops have been activated and no surveying conducted.

As Anderson left office to take on the self-appointed role of U.S. Senator, filling the vacancy created by Walter Mondale's move to the Vice-Presidency, he proposed a seven point program to resolve the powerline impasse.



According to the Minneapolis *Tribune*, Dec. 12, '76, the program includes: 1) an independent study of health and safety effects of the proposed line, 2) compensation for power line easements to landowners in excess of market value, 3) a shift in liability for power line easements from landowner to utilities, 4) special protective status for prime farmland, 5) banning diagonal crossing of fields, 6) paying of court costs by the utilities in condemnation cases where the award exceeds the initial offer, and 7) legislative hearings on the prospects of burying power lines underground.

Anderson's successor, Rudy Perpich, seems to be moving cautiously on the issue. He appears content to let the legislature chew on the matter awhile. Performing a rather nifty coup, Perpich drove out to the farm areas unaccompanied and talked with farmers. In contrast to Anderson's seclusion-style governing habits, the tactic was refreshing and certainly helped simmer down the emotions.

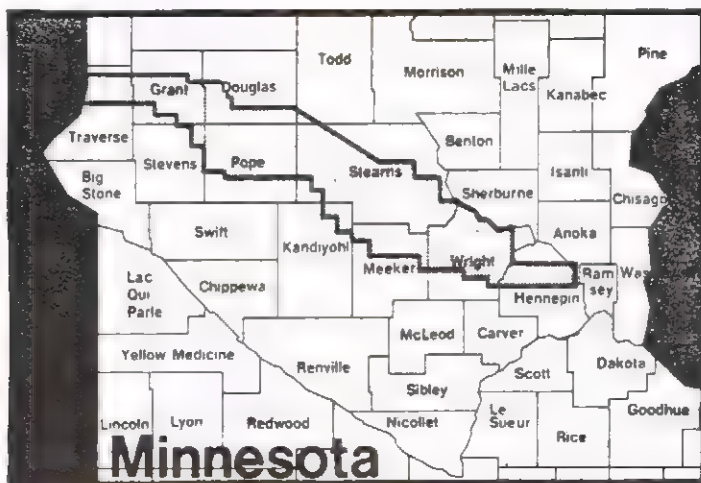
On the other hand the tactic demonstrated a style of slick polictics common in Minnesota. Perfected by the master himself, Hubert Humphrey, I would call this style, an art really, corporate liberal chameleonism.

To adhere fully to the principles of chameleonism a politician must be committed steadfastly to upholding the interests of big corporations while saying publicly he's not. Second, one has to be prepared to lobby for changes in the law which at the same time appear to weaken the stranglehold of control now enjoyed by the big corporations while doling out small concessions to the taxpayers. And the third requirement is to take on the traits, language, manners, clothes, of whatever group of people you happen to be with. Changing your color depending on your surroundings, like the chameleon.

Hubert Humphrey mastered this art to such an astounding degree, that the newcomers to the field, i.e. Wendy Anderson, Walter Mondale and Rudy Perpich, will have to devote many hours to serious study and reflection to come close to equal The Great One.

Chameleonism is especially useful in fracasces like this power line business.

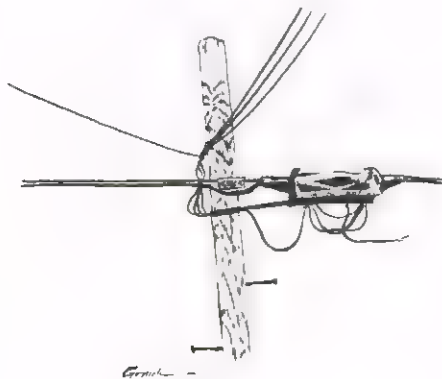
For example, cooperatives are supposed to provide economically priced goods and services demanded by the members. There are more coops and coop members in Minnesota



Shaded area is the power-line corridor designated by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Council. (Map courtesy Minneapolis Tribune)

than in any other state. If all this is true, the consumers of Minnesota should have more say on how goods are produced and distributed than anywhere else. In fact, people here are no better off in controlling economic activity. In the power line issue, the farmers whose land will be used for erection of transmission towers have little chance of effecting policy changes in their own coop, the one constructing the towers! The coops sell the fact they're consumer run, yet are insulated from influence by the consumers.

Another aspect of chameleonism emerges as the farmers end up opposing, or at least competing with, environmentalists who have successfully lobbied to protect swamps, forests and scenic areas. The State Dept. of Natural Resources by its very name should be looking out for all the resources in the state. Yet it actually does not. It keys on the wilderness/recreational lands and ignores (to a large extent) farmland. The trick is to push environmental nuisances to lands which are not being defended by enraged citizens or vested interests.



Chameleonism demands breaking down the social fabric of Minnesota communities so people deal with the system as individuals. Again, in the power line controversy the ideal situation for the bigshots is to negotiate with each individual land owner and buy up pieces of land one by one. To insure this will happen the same approach as union busting has to be used. Look out for yourself and don't trust your fellow worker, is the line. The sanctity of private property and rugged individualism is already in people's minds; the fear of collectivization, state takeover of property, Russian armies marching down on hapless farmers and taking away freedoms, all these thoughts have been carefully cultivated in people's heads to prevent folks from getting together. CURE faces enormous difficulties in holding together independent-minded farmers stretched out over Minnesota. What they have going for themselves is their common vocation, some similarity in ethnic and religious background (German Catholic) and experience in sharing equipment.

While there are countless ways corporate liberal chameleonism works to keep people divided and confused, probably the most advanced method welcomes participation by everyone, especially the people who are upset. There are countless hearings; advisory committees; information meetings; all kinds of ritual designed to create an illusion that the people do in fact have the chance to influence the course of events. And they do, except there are limits to what scale of decisions they'll let you in on.

A dimension of this same trait is isolating leaders of opposition. From what I saw of Harold Hagen, leader of CURE, he appears to be one hell of a together person. While this gives the farmers opposing the power line a clear voice, it puts Hagen in a vulnerable position. He gets more information more quickly than the membership of CURE. It puts a burden on him to constantly share that and try to include as many people as possible in each decision--which from all appearances he's been doing quite well. Even though having a highly visible leader in the short-run is effective, it must be coupled with a way of developing understanding and decision skills within the rank and file.



This is not to fault the farmers, their organizations, or Harold Hagen. But, for the farm people to win this particular fight and continue to exercise influence over policies which invade their lives, they (like all of us) will have to create new forms for democratic participation at the grassroots level. The structures pumped out by regulatory agencies aren't any help.

Corporate liberalism is the dominant system used today by those in power to maintain what they have and to expand their empires. I am concerned that struggles like this power line issue not be sucked in and co-opted. There is too much yet to be won.

From my limited exposure to the power line controversy several questions arise:

- 1) Can the protesting farmers move from a reaction to protect what they have to a position building more self-sufficient rural communities which needn't rely so heavily on imported energy?
- 2) Can the farmer blend economic issues with environmental and health issues so as to gain allies from the urban areas?
- 3) Can the farmers relate to the agrarian radicalism of the thirties and to the various people's movements of the sixties and become part of a broader political direction?
- 4) Can the kind of involvement generated so far be kept alive through the growing season and for years to come?

In Minnesota, the farmer-labor movement of the thirties represented one of the most thrilling people's movements in the history of the United States. Holding together conservative small business people, farmers, unionists, left-wing organizers, and a smattering of professionals within one political group was a feat. From my study of that era, the farmer repeatedly backed out once prices perked up and the banks went easy on calling in loans and mortgages. The movement suffered and leadership shifted to the cities and small town editors and lawyers.

The farmers fighting the power line are, for the most part, well-off and politically conservative. Yet their prosperity, like that of most Americans, is becoming less and less secure. Whether economic uncertainty coupled with the insult forced on them by the power line will trigger a rekindling of the populist fervor of years ago remains to be seen. The corporate liberal mentality in Minnesota was created in response to the threat of the farmer-labor movement.

Single issue fights can build political understanding and organization. With continued commitment and solidarity we could see a rebirth of that old anti-monopoly defiance. This is expecting a good deal from the farmers. Yet within their own discussions, bread and butter issues beyond stopping the power line get raised. And that must be viewed as a healthy first step.

*S of L afterword: an organization in upstate New York, UPSET, is also fighting the same kind of battle against high-voltage power lines. They are seeking support in downstate New York and will be conducting a petition drive. A large demonstration is being planned for March or April. They also would like people to write N.Y. Gov. Carey to stop the power lines. UPSET's address is P.O. Box 571, Canton, N.Y. 13617 (315) 355-2512*



# My People Are My Home

Reviewed by Martha Roth

"My People Are My Home" is the title of a film about the American writer Meridel LeSueur, who was born in the midwest in 1900 and still lives for a part of every year with her family in St. Paul. The film was made by the Twin Cities Women's Film Collective and financed by small, grants, loans, and contributions. Technically expert, good to look at and listen to, "My People Are My Home" merits notice also for succeeding as a regional endeavor, locally financed, locally made, and dealing with a local subject. For LeSueur, although her work is increasingly read, loved, and influential, is proud to be identified with the midwest.

LeSueur maintains that there is a necessary distinction between male and female expressions of reality. Obviously, men's and women's lives are

different; the women who populate LeSueur's writings are spacious, life-giving, archetypal creatures who both embody and transmit a deep, earthy vitality. In giving them expression, LeSueur has evolved a cyclic, lyrical style, evocative and repetitious, which she maintains is a specifically female form of art and which she contrasts with "linear" art, the straight lines and logical progressions that she says characterize men's work.

"My People Are My Home" succeeds in conveying to the viewer this cyclic sense of women's reality and women's expression. With LeSueur's beautiful deep voice on the soundtrack, reading from her own work, the film shows us organic images of growth and decay--the recurring patterns of rural life: sowing, harvesting, fairs and storms, lush prairies and abandoned farms. The old prairie ways are vanishing, along with the prairie itself, and LeSueur celebrates the past with a firm, understanding anger.

There are old documents, too: handbills and family photographs, LeSueur's mother and grandmother; her stepfather, Art LeSueur, socialist mayor of Minot, North Dakota; clippings and photographs from different periods in her life--from California, where she worked in the theatre and films, and from the Minneapolis Teamster Strike of 1934 about which she wrote "I Was Marching," one of her best-known stories. Image and narration meander along a curve of experience rather than building to a single energy release.

The film was shown recently by New Projections, a series sponsored by Femme Films and the Twin Cities Women's Film Collective. The series of "documentary, personal, animated" short films, mostly by and about women, is screened every other Thursday at 5:30 and 7:30 in the Minneapolis Public Library and every other Saturday at 8:00 and 10:00 in the St. Paul YWCA. Upcoming dates are March 3 and 5;

March 17 and 19; March 31-April 2; and alternate weeks thereafter.

It was instructive to see "My People Are My Home" on the same program with a short film called "Men's Lives," which was much more rudimentary as cinema but, I felt, more powerful--perhaps because less familiar. Not being a man, I'm less sensitive to the daily trashings of men's sensibilities as well as women's--the exhortations to male children in our culture, from parents, schools, and the mass media, to take, make, seize, do, operate, control, rip, slash, tear, and generally leave a mark on the world--a bruise, a smudgy thumbprint; a mortal wound.

LeSueur's beauty and tranquility contrasted with the bitter insistence of "Men's Lives"; she made me want to believe her, to believe that the lyrical flow she commands is more than the individual expression of her art--that it is a current that can nourish me, too; that an absence of clear direction needn't mean aimlessness; that lack of rigid logic doesn't have to mean a lack of clarity.

I have difficulty accepting any position that assumes necessary differences between men and women beyond anatomy. And it's possible that in her search for a corrective to our culture's rigid conception of "art" LeSueur may occasionally succumb to flaccidity. "My People Are My Home" is probably too long; one or two fewer circlings of the curve might improve it. With those objections out of the way, I heartily recommend the film and commend the collective that made it and showed it. "My People Are My Home:: the deep soft grass that covered the prairies of the mid-west is gone and will never grow again. Like all prairie creatures LeSueur has been stripped of her natural habitat; fortunately, she has been strong enough and skilled enough to discover another in the hearts of those who love her.

For rental information contact:  
Neala Yount, TC Womens Film Collective  
1238 - Ray Place, St Paul, MN 55108

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*Martha Roth is a poet and editor  
living in Minneapolis.*

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# Traven's Jungle Novels

Reviewed by Nhat Hong

Sometimes in the course of trying to lead a self-consciously political life with all its attendant reading and discussion, a person can start to feel bogged down. Political writings and the reading of them can, at times, have the devilitating effect of using more energy than the effort generates. After any extended submersion, one is left gasping for air.

Recently, feeling the need to take a brief vacation from the stacks of non-fiction anarchist books and pamphlets that await my attention, I began reading a series of inter-related novels by B. Traven that are known as the Jungle Novels. It was pure oxygen for my fires.

The Jungle Novels (Government, The Carreta, March to Monteria, The Troza (unpublished), The Rebellion of the Hanged, and The General from the Jungle.) graphically portray the pre-revolutionary period

of Mexico by following the lives of the "common" people, especially the native peoples who occupy the lowest place in Mexican society. During this time, fully half of the entire rural population of Mexico was bound to debt and slavery. The alliance of government, capitalists, police, and the church conspired to keep things that way.

The rural worker could not escape the clutches of this alliance for one simple reason. The employer was the source not only of the worker's meagre wages, but also of the necessities of life at prices cruelly in excess of the former. For example, Andres, an ox-cart driver in the novel The Carreta, finds himself sold in a card game to a new owner for 25 pesos. Says Traven, describing the economics of the deal,

"By the time Andres had worked out that debt of twenty-five pesos, he had run up a debt on his own account with don Laureano of forty-two pesos for goods he had bought from him and sixteen pesos in cash he had needed for other things. Now that he had served his employer well and truly and with proper Christian humility and submission for over three years, his debt with don Laureano amounted to ninety-four pesos. A mathematician could have told him in two minutes, not as a guess but with precision, that if he continued serving him so well for forty years he would by that time have a debt of nine hundred and twenty-four pesos, thirty centavos."

While the proletarian characters in the first several novels feel the full force of these arrangements, they are powerless in the face of them, remaining largely unconscious and necessarily submissive.

But each new novel brings further degradation of the workers' conditions, a strengthening of their resolve, and a growing disposition to strike at the immediate root of their problem, the

owners. Finally, in the brutality of the remote mahogany lumber camps, where they have been sold to work off their debts, it becomes imperative for these workers to rebel. Faced with inhuman demands for productivity and fiendish punishment for failing, the mahogany cutters destroy their tormentors and go on to form the beginning of a guerilla army. In the final novel, General from the Jungle, the oppressive state-church-capitalist alliance reaps what it has sown as the guerilla army comes out of the jungle conscious of their role and unable and unwilling to allow their own and their class brothers and sisters lives to continue under the old conditions.

One of the most striking aspects of these novels is Traven's ability to write a good story by itself and also punctuate it with wry political observations which stand on their own. The relationship of the two is not at all uncomfortable; simple human terms stimulate the reader to a more profound understanding of the destructive effects that an exploitative, authoritarian society has on its people.



This relationship between story and political comment is important to the continuity of the novels. I was initially disconcerted by the contrast between the passivity of the exploited and Traven's stinging comments in the first novels, but this tension prepared me all the more for the explosive ferocity of the last ones.

Traven's interjections ring with the libertarian communist message. Take, for example, this ironic discussion of the economic freedom of one of Mexico's rural working class.

"He was a free laborer. He only had to pay his employer what he owed him and then he might go where he liked. The whole world was his and

all it produced. No one forced him to run up debts, neither the law nor the state compelled him to. He was entirely free to choose whether he contracted debts or not. If he did not amass capital in order one day to be a forwarding agent, a factory owner or a finquero, it was only because he did not choose to save. The way was open to anyone who wanted to start a bank. If the laborer did not become a banker it was only because he blew all he got. The capitalist system is all a myth, trumped up by agitators and anarchists in order to fan the flames of a world revolution and take over the banks and perfumed daughters of the directors. Save, workingman, and then you can acquire the bank at the first corner you come to--without the bother of a world revolution"

Traven doesn't avoid throwing out more serious advice either. After describing a tribe's unique annual process of electing and keeping their chief honest, he says,

"Workers would be advised to adopt this well-proven Indian method of election, particularly with the officials of their trade unions and political organizations--and not only in Russia, where it is most necessary. In all other countries, too, where Marx and Lenin are set up as saints the militant working class could achieve success much more surely if they lit a good fire yearly under their leaders' behinds. No leader is indispensable. And the more often leaders are on red-hot seats, the more lively the political movement would be. Above all things, the people must never be sentimental."



Traven (a pseudonym) is an interesting story himself. He has been the subject of much speculation, because since first becoming known with the publication of Death Ship in Germany in 1926, Traven has refused to meet the press in public or in person, or to divulge many details about his life. Traven insists that readers meet him through his writing, saying that in large part, his novels are drawn from personal experience.

But the general relief of Traven's life has been pieced together. He was born in Chicago in 1890 to Norwegian-Swedish emigrant parents. As a child, he started working at a very early age and then shipped out as a cabin boy at about age ten. Traven played some role in the political life of Germany during 1913-1919.

He was an actor in Munich at the time and began publishing a semi-clandestine anarchist journal Der Ziegelbrenner (The Brickmaker) under the name "Ket Marut." He continued publishing for several years and threw himself into the abortive German revolution in 1918 in an attempt to influence it in a radical-libertarian direction. When the revolution failed, Traven was arrested, but managed to escape. As a fugitive, he published a dozen further issues of the Brickmaker. Then in 1920, he emigrated to Mexico where he began to write novels.

Traven as a writer has been very well-known to European readers, but he has remained relatively unknown in the United States. Part of this neglect is undoubtedly due to the reluctance of American publishers to publish novels with such strong, pointed class-conscious content. Indeed, Traven's books have on occasion been banned. Nazi Germany did it, confiscating his German royalties and threatening his life. The same novels in particular made the big publishers in Mexico uneasy to the point where they too threatened to ban him.

But this kind of reaction is easily understood. Our enemies know good, subversive literature when they see it. They are afraid of the oxygen it brings to our fires. They know it fans the flames of discontent.

If you're finding the weather a little cold this winter and politics a little tepid, nursing a Bicentennial hangover during Jimmy Carter's honeymoon, I would highly recommend stoking your fires with the *Jungle Novels*.

---

*What Hong is a former collective member now living in New Haven, Connecticut.*

# FAMILY

Reviewed by Meg Keene

*Family* by Pa Chin, introduction by Olga Lang, Anchor Books, 1972, pb. \$2.25

Family is Pa Chin's semi-autobiographical novel about growing up in China in the 1920's and breaking out of the confinement of family and society. I consider this book to be a fine explication of basic anarchist beliefs and their application. It not only contains valuable information about China in that period, but also discusses questions we are asking now.

## Pa Chin's Life

Li Fei-nan came from a wealthy family and abandoned it for the anarchist movement in the 20's. He adopted the name of "Pa Chin," as he is known in China, or in English, "Ba Kin", from the names of Bakunin and Kropotkin. He wrote to Kropotkin. and was also friends with Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and others by mail.

Pa Chin was one of the most popular modern authors in China. He tried to write good literature that would also depict real situations, and show people a possible way to behave with integrity. His heroes and heroines were all anarchists--a fact he was forced later, by the Chinese Communist government, to disguise.

He also wrote essays and translated anarchist works into Chinese, including the entire works of Kropotkin. In China Esperanto was used to translate books and pamphlets from Russia, Spain, England, France, Germany, Italy, and Mexico into Chinese. A vast selection of anarchist literature was translated by Esperanto. Pa Chin was an Esperanto scholar, and was responsible for much of this.

There has been a powerful anarchist movement in China since the early 1900's. I don't want to write its history here, but a good summary can be had in "The Origins of the Anarchist Movement in China" (obtainable from Ammunition Books, 4403 2nd St., Detroit, Mich., 48021, for 25¢ and postage). I will just refer to those areas which directly pertain to this short biography.

The anarchist movement reached its peak in the 20's and early 30's, but was greatly weakened by the Japanese invasion of 1935. 1936 was a year of revival for anarchism. One reason why Pa Chin did not renounce his opinions then was because of his hopes for and support of the Spanish revolution. In Shanghai, he and other anarchists reorganized and held demonstrations in support of their friends in Spain. They also established the first Vietnamese Anarchist group. The weekly bulletin of the CNT-FAI was reprinted regularly in Chinese from 1936-1938.

The Communist Party approved of the parts in Pa Chin's work that condemned the old family and society, but they didn't like references to anarchism. Later, Chin tried to cooperate with the Party, partly because things were better than before the revolution. His works were published by the Communists, but with the parts about anarchism deleted, making them historically inaccurate. He was alternately praised, criticized, accepted and condemned, according to the whims of the leaders.

Pa Chin never expressed doubts or despair in his fiction until 1947. He was then allowed to go on writing, but no longer wrote original works--instead, being forced to re-write his own books. This regression reached its peak during the Cultural Revolution when:

"Finally, after months of threats, on June 20, 1968, Pa Chin was dragged to the Peoples Stadium of Shanghai. Those present and those who watched the scene on television saw him kneeling on broken glass and heard the shouts accusing him of being a traitor and enemy of Mao. They also heard him break the silence at the end and shout at the top of his voice, "You have your thoughts and I have mine. Mine is the fact and you can't change it even if you kill me." (from the Introduction by Olga Lang)

#### The Book

Family tells the story of three brothers growing up in a large rich patriarchal family in the 1920's. Each of the brothers has a different attitude toward struggle and how to live his life.

The oldest brother, Chueh-hsin, was mentally and emotionally broken through a life policy of the "silent bow." This means--obey and go along with others on the outside while maintaining your own philosophy to yourself. His father had died and Chueh-hsin swore to keep the family in order. He continually sacrificed himself to his family's wishes, including a marriage to a stranger instead of the woman he loved, and later the exile of his wife due to insane family superstitions.

In a preface to the book, there is a letter from Pa Chin to his own brother, who did these same two things to himself and appears to be the model for Chueh-hsin.

The two younger brothers, although

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Augsburg College

they lived in the same family and were presented with many of the same choices as their older brother, managed to escape the family. All three brothers read articles about the "new thought" but only Chueh-min and Chueh-hui practiced their ideals.

Chueh-min's struggle was mainly to marry the woman he loved, also a rebel and a new thinker. In Family, romantic love is depicted as a vital alternative to the old style family and arranged marriages. Pa Chin seems to him, though, that Chueh-min might stop at this accomplishment whereas Chueh-hui went further.

Chueh-hui was the fighter both in the family and outside, publishing a radical magazine with some friends. Chueh-hui had both a broad social outlook and acute personal consciousness of his oppression. This is one of my favorite things about this book: its demonstration of the relationship between personal and political struggle. Chueh-hui's consciousness of his own misery and that of those around him made him a revolutionary. His rebellion in the family and out of it are equally necessary and each makes the other possible. It is noted in "Origins of the Chinese Anarchist Movement" that the later success of the Chinese Communists may be due in part to the work of the anarchists in overcoming family domination and religious superstition, "All of which the Marxist considered beneath his notice, but without the disappearance of which Marxism could never have come into power."

One thing that disturbs me about Chueh-hui is that he's sometimes stoical and pokes at others, especially the girls, for being too "soft." I'm not sure what Pa Chin's attitude was towards this--it could be an aspect of his youth that he criticized or he could have thought that stoicism was a revolutionary characteristic. Also

Chueh-hui never resolves (and probably neither does Pa Chin) conflicts he has about sacrifice. While he sees that useless sacrifices are bad he still appears to think that being revolutionary demands a lot of self-sacrifice, rather than seeing social change primarily as enlargement of himself and attainment of his own desires. This seems, from my reading of the classical anarchist movements, to have been a real historic conflict. Traditional anarchism often has a strong base in moralism, which is related to this type of stoicism and self-sacrifice.

I consider Family to be feminist as well as anarchist because of the emphasis on family and personal change, women's liberation, and Pa Chin's treatment of the female characters. Although the women in the book don't seem to play as important roles as

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the three brothers, they have their own struggles and characters and aren't just objects necessary for male action.

At one point I was amazed that Cousin Chin's (one of the two main female characters) greatest concern was whether to cut her hair. It seemed as though the girls' struggles were shown as being sillier than the boys'. Later, reading some Chinese history, I discovered that hair-cutting was a major event, often involving whipping, public denouncement as a prostitute, or sale into prostitution as a punishment from the woman's family and officials.

Family demonstrates that life and social change are dependant on more than exterior oppression and blind historical determinism. While the choices we're given in an oppressive society are limited, we can still (as each of the three brothers did) chose to fight and struggle or to submit and be destroyed. To some extent, we create our fate and that of others when we make this choice.

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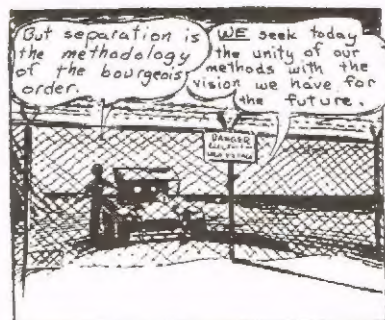
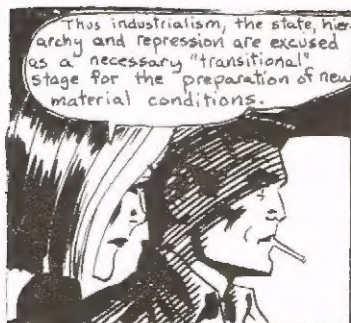
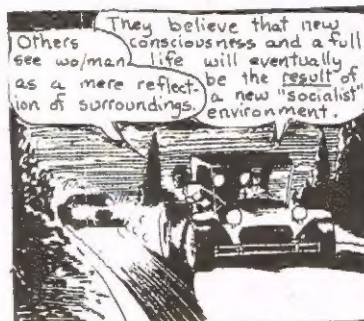
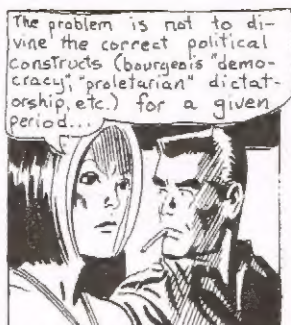
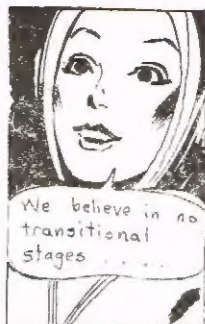
Meg Keene is an ex-nursing student living in New Orleans, an anarcho-feminist currently breaking up with her boyfriend



Much the most necessary correction in Marx's theory is as to the causes of changes in methods of production. Methods of production appear in Marx as prime causes, and the reasons for which they change from time to time are left completely unexplained. As a matter of fact, methods of production change, in the main, owing to intellectual causes, owing, that is to say, to scientific discoveries and inventions. Marx thinks that discoveries and inventions are made when the economic situation calls for them. This, however, is a quite unhistorical view. Why was there practically no experimental science from the time of Archimedes to the time of Leonardo? For six centuries after Archimedes the economic conditions were such as should have made scientific work easy. It was the growth of science after the Renaissance that led to modern industry. This intellectual causation of economic processes is not adequately recognized by Marx.

History can be viewed in many ways, and many general formulae can be invented which cover enough of the ground to seem adequate if the facts are carefully selected. I suggest, without undue solemnity, the following alternative theory of the causation of the industrial revolution: industrialism is due to modern science, modern science is due to Galileo, Galileo is due to Copernicus, Copernicus is due to the Renaissance, the Renaissance is due to the fall of Constantinople, the fall of Constantinople is due to the migration of the Turks, the migration of the Turks is due to the dessication of Central Asia. Therefore the fundamental study in searching for historical causes is hydrography.

---- Bertrand Russell ----



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